

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 05538 271440Z
ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5538

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, IS
SUBJECT: ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

1. DURING A MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN JULY 26, HE TOLD ME THAT BEGIN WAS UNDER STRONG PRESSURE FROM GENERAL SHARON (WHO CHAIRS THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON SETTLEMENTS) AND FROM MANY OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE LIKUD TO APPROVE IN THE NEAR FUTURE 12 NEW SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK WHOSE SITES HAVE BEEN SELECTED AND FOR WHICH THERE ARE SETTLEMENT GROUPS ORGANIZED AND PRACTICALLY READY, ALL OF THEM SPONSORED BY THE GUSH EMUNIM (TODAY'S MAARIV DESCRIBES IN SOME DETAIL THIS PROPOSED SETTLEMENT PROGRAM). DAYAN SAID THAT HE IS WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO A MORATORIUM ON ALL NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY DURING THIS PERIOD LEADING UP TO GENEVA, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT BEGIN'S EVENTUAL DECISION WOULD BE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE ISSUE WILL BE JOINED TODAY IN THE KNESSET DEBATE ON BEGIN'S TRIP, SINCE THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST TO BEGIN HAS RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY HERE. HE WAS
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OBVIOUSLY DEEPLY TROUBLED AND ALSO PESSIMISTIC.

2. DAYAN STRESSED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT JULY 26 THAT THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON SETTLEMENTS HAD RECOGNIZED KADDUM, OFRA, AND MA'ALE ADUMIN AS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED FULL-FLEDGED SETTLEMENTS WAS MERELY COMPLETION OF A PROCESS BEGUN UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT AND SHOULD

NOT BE VIEWED AS A RESPONSE TO OUR MORATORIUM PROPOSAL
(TODAY'S JERUSALEM POST QUOTES SHARON AS SAYING THAT
THE DECISION WAS INFLUENCED BY THE NEED TO PROVIDE
SERVICES SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS FOR THE SETTLEMENTS).

3. DAYAN ALSO SAID THAT THE INAUGURATION TODAY OF TWO
SETTLEMENTS NEAR YAMIT IN THE RAFFA AREA OF SINAI WAS
OBVIOUSLY VERY UNFORTUNATE TIMING BUT ONCE AGAIN WAS
MERELY THE COMPLETION OF A PROCESS BEGIN OVER A
YEAR AGO WHEN THESE SETTLEMENTS WERE INITIATED. HE
SAID THAT HE HAD DECLINED AN INVITATION TO ATTEND THOSE
INAUGURATIONS DESPITE HIS CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE
LEADER OF THE SETTLEMENT GROUP.

4. THERE IS SOME PRESS SPECULATION TODAY THAT YESTER-
DAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING KADDUM AND THE OTHER TWO
EXISTING SETTLEMENTS WHICH ARE NOW MADE LEGAL WAS
DESIGNED TO PLACATE THE GUSH EMUNIM "BECAUSE NO NEW
SETTLEMENTS WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE NEAR FUTURE."
THIS MAY WELL PROVE TO BE WISHFUL THINKING, BUT IS AT
LEAST ONE POSSIBILITY.

5. THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IS OBVIOUSLY CLOSE TO A PUBLIC
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SOME KIND ABOUT ITS FUTURE SETTLEMENTS
POLICY, AND IT MAY COME TODAY IN THE MAJOR KNESSET
DEBATE ON THE OUTCOME OF BEGIN'S TRIP.
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